

The Evolution and Implications of Husserl's Account of the Imagination

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Abstract This paper examines the phenomenological considerations which govern an important transition in the thought of Edmund Husserl, namely his gradual disenchantment with the view that acts of the imagination are given to consciousness in the manner of a semblance, and his decision to replace it with the view that they should more accurately be understood to be reproductions of non-positated perceptions. The central conclusion of this paper will be that the logic of Husserl's own analysis points to a further phenomenological discovery that Husserl himself does not fully articulate, but which helps to explain his initial attraction toward an imagistic account of imagining. This is the finding that a structure homologous to picture-consciousness is liable to arise in the context of nested reproductions, and in particular that acts of remembering imagining bear the act-character of pictoriality.

1 Introduction

The structure of this paper is as follows. After my introductory remarks in this opening section, I shall proceed in section 2 to examine Husserl's account of picture-consciousness. The reason for clarifying Husserl's account of picture-consciousness at an early stage in this paper is that it will provide us with a way of adjudicating at a later stage on whether a given intentional object could validly be construed as an *image-object* in the Husserlian sense. In section 3, I shall discuss Husserl's early view of the imagination, in which he was inclined toward an imagistic account. In section 4 I shall explain the reasons behind Husserl's transition from his early to his mature position, according to which the diverse acts

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of intuitional presentation (e.g. remembering, expecting, imagining) come to be conceived instead as reproductions of posited or non-posited perceptions. In section 5, I shall discuss nested reproductions, and argue that the essential structure of picture-consciousness discussed in section 2 turns out to be capable of re-appearing in the context of certain such nestings, and that this clarifies and improves Husserl's initial intuition that imagining is connected in some important way with picture-consciousness.¹

Let me begin by pointing out that one of the reasons why the question of mediated or non-primordial intuition is so important to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is that it provides the basis for a structural relation between otherwise seemingly disparate conscious acts such as, on the one hand, horizontal awareness of the averted aspects of a spatio-temporal perceptual object and, on the other, awareness of a foreign subjectivity during the empathic encounter with another person. Indeed, by 1923/4, Husserl believed that questions having to do with the stratification of experience into layers of varying immediacy turn out to be constitutive of transcendental subjectivity itself. In a lecture contained in *Erste Philosophie II*, Husserl goes so far as to say that

[...] transcendental subjectivity in general is given in stages of relative immediacy and mediacy, and exists [at all] only insofar as it is given in such stages, stages of an intentional implication. (Hua VIII, p. 175)²

Husserl formed the belief that the structure of what he calls here “intentional implication” had the capacity to illuminate the nature of all kinds of acts involving mediated intuition, in all the “peculiarity of [their] subjective being and [...] subjective performance” (Hua VIII, p. 128).³ As I shall elaborate in this paper, “intentional implication” turns out to go to the very heart of Husserl's mature understanding of such ostensibly diverse acts as memory, expectation, and what he calls “phantasy” (*Phantasie*).⁴ In a different way, it also informs his understanding of the structure of picture-consciousness.

In the first instance, the distinction between what Husserl calls “the stages of relative immediacy and mediacy” is a distinction between presentation (*Gegenwärtigung*) and re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung*). This canonical distinction underpins all of Husserl's mature thought and is exemplified in his understanding of the relation between perception and phantasy. Even in his early thought, he knew that, in the context of phenomenological investigation, it was a fundamental mistake to think that perception involves a mediating image. The problem when it came to phantasy lay in upholding phantasy's intuitional character while accounting for the fact that the

¹ It is not within the scope of the present article to provide a complete account of the development of Husserl's genetic phenomenology. This is to say that certain texts relevant to Husserl's transition to a genetic account of intentionality, such as Hua XI, Hua XXXI, and Hua XXXIII, may not receive direct scrutiny in this paper.

² No complete English translation of Hua VIII has been published. The English translation I provide comes from Bernet, Kern & Marbach (1995, p. 154).

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⁴ Throughout this paper, the term “phantasy” (so spelt) will be used in the Husserlian sense of *Phantasie*.

phantasy object is not primordially present. Husserl was fully aware of Brentano's position on this matter, having attended his lectures in Vienna in 1884/5. Brentano thought that phantasy was only approximately intuitional, and that, more specifically, phantasy "presentations" turn out to be partly intuitional and partly conceptual (Mohanty 2008, p. 307). But it is evident that Husserl felt that the Brentanian view compromised phantasy's wholly intuitional character. The defect in Brentano's account, according to Husserl's early view, was that Brentano focussed on phenomenal content to the exclusion of analysing the interpreting apprehension. Husserl initially tried to resolve the dilemma by pursuing the hypothesis that phantasy, unlike perception, is given in an act-character of pictoriality.

In order to adequately adjudicate on this hypothesis it would seem to be appropriate for us to reflect upon what it is in the first place to be aware of a picture as a picture, before proceeding to consider Husserl's early account of phantasy. We shall find, as Husserl did, that the imagistic account of phantasy runs into various difficulties, difficulties which seem to have forced Husserl into nothing short of a reappraisal of the foundations of consciousness. We shall follow the transition in Husserl's thought to his mature position, according to which acts not only of phantasy, but of memory and expectation too, are understood to be, in a sense that we shall explore, "reproductions" of (respectively) non-positing or positing acts of perception. In this sense we shall find emerging from Husserl's thought a sharp structural dichotomy in his understanding of re-presentation – also sometimes referred to as *intuitional presentation* – between the distinct structures of reproductive re-presentation and the perceptual re-presentation found in picture-consciousness. I wish to argue, however, that in the context of more complex acts of reproductive re-presentation, a structure remarkably close to picture-consciousness is in fact liable to arise. If we are to investigate claims that certain acts of the imagination are in some phenomenologically rigorous sense "like" looking at a picture, then it is important for us to begin our discussion by developing an account of picture-consciousness.

2 Picture Consciousness

Consider the following example. On the desk before me lies a postcard, which happens to be a print of Rembrandt's *Homer*. I am entitled to assert, in the usual art critical sense, that it affords me a certain "view" of a certain "Homer", although strictly speaking, of course, I do not *see* the picture-subject (*Bildsujet*). Before me is a postcard, not a man. Let us note in passing that the postcard, being a print of Rembrandt's *Homer*, is a photograph of a painting, that is, a picture of a picture. This fact, however, will not affect our discussion, for this factual nesting of images is in this case not phenomenologically salient. The postcard remains for me a straightforward "picture-thing" (*Bildding*) in its own right, a picture of an enrobed elderly man. It is a physical spatio-temporal object, capable, for example, of being torn and of curling and fading in sunlight. The phenomenological question before us is precisely how the man's appearance comes to be represented to me by way of the primordial presentation of the picture-thing, the postcard.

In spite of what I have just said, it would be mistaken to think that the very idea of perceiving the picture-subject is not somehow at work in picture-consciousness. A sense of what it would be like to perceive the man is contained in the experience of the presentation of the picture. As Eduard Marbach puts it, the picture-subject is seen *as it were*. And in Marbach's formal terminology, perception of the depicted picture-subject as such is *patently implied* in picture-consciousness (Marbach 1993, p. 131). This is to say that to perceive the man as he is represented would be a fulfilment of the meaning intention of the picture.

Thus far it has been relatively straightforward to delineate two distinct objectivities given to picture-consciousness. On the one hand there is the picture-thing, the physical entity which belongs to the empirical world. The picture-thing is, more explicitly, a picture-bearing-thing, the rectangular piece of coloured card lying on my desk. It is embedded in my spatio-temporal environment, and in that sense just one object among others. On the other hand, it has become clear that this piece of card refers to something beyond itself. The card is *about* something, and the content of this aboutness is not something that I can arbitrarily specify. Instead, the aboutness is proper to the card. In a stipulative sense, it refers to Homer the historical individual. But more to the point for our present concerns, it refers intuitively to a particular individual, the enrobed elderly man. This man himself is the picture-subject. One's apprehension of this man is prior to one's judgement regarding whether or not he exists.

On the basis of what has been said so far, we have grounds for endorsing the claim that the notion of resemblance is in some way constitutive of picture-consciousness. The picture-subject, one feels bound to say, is given *intuitively* in some suitably broad sense of the term, though not in the manner of perception. The picture-subject, as Marbach puts it, is "given in the mode of non-actuality" (Marbach 1993, p. 126). The enrobed man is not now here in person in my perceptual field. The most natural way of explaining the observations (1) that the picture-subject is given in an inauthentic (non-primordial) intuition and (2) that the apprehension of the picture-subject seems to be founded in the perception of the picture-thing is to appeal to the idea of resemblance.

Yet we must ask whether we really mean here a resemblance between picture-thing and picture-subject. In certain respects, it is true that moments of resemblance do exist between the respective phenomenal contents of picture-thing and picture-subject. The part of "Homer's" beard that appears grey can be correlated with a grey region on the postcard. But even with something as ostensibly simple as colour, there seems to be a problem with the extent to which the case can be made for a *necessary* resemblance between picture-thing and picture-subject. Part of "Homer's" clothing appears to give off a golden shimmer. On careful examination, however, the corresponding area on the postcard is in fact pale yellow interspersed with regions of brown. It is "Homer's" garment which shimmers golden, not the postcard. We are now forced to recognise that picture-consciousness cannot be adequately accounted for in terms of just two intentional objects, the picture-thing and the picture-subject. Something giving off a golden shimmer is presentified. It is not the postcard, which is yellow and brown in the corresponding region. And it is not the man's garment, as the golden shimmer appears here and now; the garment is

not here and now. It seems, therefore, that there must be a third intentional object. The Husserlian answer is that one sees a so-called “picture-object” or “image-object” (*Bildobjekt*).⁵ The image-object is a *semblance*. One sees a *semblance* of a golden shimmer. One sees a *semblance* of a grey beard. One sees a *semblance* of an enrobed elderly man.

The relation between picture-thing and picture-subject, then, is not *merely* one of signification. Signification does not necessarily entail resemblance, a fact demonstrated by the majority of words in the English language. But an adequate account of picture-consciousness, as we have just seen, does entail the notion of resemblance. More specifically, picture-consciousness—when fully explicated—entails an *awareness* of a resemblance. The appearance of the picture-subject is bound up with, indeed governed by, precisely the picture-thing. But the foregoing considerations suggest that the presence of moments of resemblance between the respective phenomenal contents of picture-thing and picture-subject is not constitutive of picture-consciousness. There may be factual resemblance between picture-thing and picture-subject, but according to the Husserlian account, it is the apprehension (pre-reflective or otherwise) of a resemblance between image-object and picture-subject which is constitutive of picture-consciousness.

It will prove important for us to note at this point that there is a relation of founding between picture-thing and image-object. More precisely, if one is unable to perceive the picture-thing, then one is necessarily unable to view the image-object. Perception of the picture-thing pervades awareness of the image-object. Picture-consciousness itself is founded upon and permeated by the primordial perception of the picture-thing. If one is able to see the image-object, then one is then able in principle to switch one’s attention back towards the picture-thing, and indeed back and forth as one pleases.

As I indicated earlier, in picture-consciousness I am not free to imagine any image-object that I wish. The constitution of the image-object in consciousness is constrained by what is given in the phenomenal content of the picture-thing. Yet the image-object is still a construct of an act of the imagination: it is an ideal, or purely intentional object. The semblance is what I make of the picture, not a spatio-temporal entity that I perceive. The semblance is not substantive, in the sense that its constitution is necessarily conditioned by the constitution of something else, namely the picture-thing. The semblance, then, is a pure objectivity, constituted in consciousness in an heteronomous act of the imagination.

Husserl remarks that the image-object “truly does not exist” (Hua XXIII, §10, p. 22; 2005c, p. 23). An assertion of this kind is certainly warranted, indeed arguably quite helpful inasmuch as it registers at a stroke two important facts. Firstly, the image-object is not real in the sense that it does not belong to the domain of spatio-temporal reality. Secondly, the image-object also does not possess the quality of what is perhaps best called ideal existence. The number π may be said to have ideal existence because it possesses the character of being pre-given, of

⁵ In general I shall favour the use of the term “image-object” rather than “picture-object” for two reasons. Firstly, “picture-object” seems rather too close to “picture-thing”, potentially giving rise to confusion. Secondly, I think “image-object” helps to convey the notion of resemblance more effectively than “picture-object”.

seeming to have been awaiting discovery. The number π is taken to be mind-independent: the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter exists regardless of whether people exist. But the image-object is not self-sufficient in this way. Without the picture-thing it is nothing. The image-object is, in Marbach's terminology, "permeated" by the perception of the picture-thing (Marbach 1993, p. 131). The image-object is intersubjectively verifiable, and is ontically heteronomous in relation to the picture-thing.⁶

It is now possible to see why Husserl ultimately conceives of picture-consciousness as "imaging in the sense of perceptual phantasy understood as immediate imagination" (Hua XXIII, Text 18b, p. 515; 2005c, p. 616). The paradoxical phrases "perceptual phantasy" and "immediate imagination" speak of the remarkable tensions implicit in the essential intentional structure of picture-consciousness. The imagination involved is "immediate" in the sense of not seeming to require any creative constituting effort on the part of the subject. The content of the phantasy is governed by the constitution of the picture-thing, and in this sense the phantasy is "perceptual". This layered intentional structure of picture-consciousness, though intricate, is not ultimately mysterious, which is not to deny the noetic truth of Marbach's remark that "there is something unreal about pictures" (Marbach 1993, p. 138). The phenomenological force of this latter remark lies in the fact that picture-consciousness cannot be adequately understood as simply a special kind of direct perception. The apprehension of pictoriality is not, for example, analogous to the apprehension of rectangularity. Rectangularity is a perceptually grasped property, but picture-consciousness, though founded upon and permeated by perception of the picture-thing, necessarily involves in addition some entirely new intuitional faculties. The picture-subject, which may or may not be posited, is represented in the image-object, which itself strictly does not exist but is constituted in the realm of irreality. The constitution of both image-object and picture-subject show that picture-consciousness, far from being an advanced yet fundamentally perceptual act, is in fact a *sui generis* mode of intuition of which direct perception is merely one, albeit founding, component.

3 Imagination: The Early Position

The Husserlian finding, that picture-consciousness cannot be adequately explained in terms of a theory of perception, itself already implicitly broaches the topic of the imagination. Yet in our discussion so far, there has not been a great deal of elaboration upon what exactly imagining consists in. The advantage of investigating the nature of picture-consciousness before turning to the question of what Husserl would call "pure phantasy" is that it should enable us to adjudicate with some clarity upon Husserl's early position that pure phantasy itself has the structure of picture-consciousness. This idea, that to imagine something is to picture it in one's own mind, is in certain respects a seductive one, and the unpublished manuscripts

⁶ On occasion Husserl uses the term "irreal" to describe entities that are constituted by consciousness but which do not exist. E.g. Hua XXIII, p. 77; 2005c, p. 84.

on representational consciousness which were posthumously collated in Hua XXIII show that Husserl required no small amount of phenomenological reflection in order to extricate himself eventually from its grip. Let us turn initially to Husserl's early position before addressing the reasons that led Husserl ultimately to reject it.

With respect to the relation between picture-consciousness and the imagination, questions of terminology now become particularly pressing. In German, as in English, the notion of the imagination is often bound up, through general association or etymological resonance, with the notion of an image (*Bild*). Most obviously, the etymological link is visible in the noun *Einbildung* (imagination) and the verb *sich einbilden* (to imagine). Husserl's preference for the term *Phantasie*, in reaching back etymologically to the Greek *phantazein* (make visible) via the Latin *phantasia* (appearance), helps to preclude problematic and unintended connotations with pictoriality. In English, however, the term "fantasy" (so spelt) often carries with it connotations that are not pertinent to the present discussion. Talk of "fantasy" sometimes has overtones connected with desire which are not directly relevant to the Husserlian concerns which are the focus of this paper. "Fantasy" is also often used in relation to an event or occurrence considered to be either impossible or improbable. As I indicated earlier, throughout I shall often make use of the term "phantasy" (*Phantasie*) and do so in the Husserlian sense, both to avoid implying pictoriality where no such implication is intended and to avoid the unintended connotations often invoked by the word in its more common spelling of "fantasy".

The most general feature of phantasy that Husserl grasps from the outset (and in this respect he remains consistent throughout his treatment of the imagination) is its intuitional character. As he suggests in the sixth of his *Logical Investigations*, in both perception and phantasy the object is given in what he calls "intuitive presentation" (*Vorstellung*) (Hua XIX, p. 610; 2005b, p. 235). In phantasy presentation, it is not a sign or symbol that is given to consciousness. Instead, an object appears, but not "in person" (*leibhaft*). As Husserl puts it, "it is as though it were there, but only as though" (Hua XXIII, p. 16; 2005c, p. 18). The "as though", then, is double-edged. In one respect it points to a structural analogy with perception. Indeed, as Husserl observes,

[...] to every possible perceptual presentation there belongs a possible phantasy presentation that refers to the same object and, in a certain sense, even refers to it in precisely the same way. (Hua XXIII, p. 15; 2005c, p. 17)

As in perception, phantasy involves both act-matter and act-character. And again, as in perception, the act-matter is perspectival: it affords consciousness a *view of the object*, not the object itself. Yet in a different respect, the "as though" registers precisely a differentiation from perception. The object is not "there", "here", or "now" in my perceptual field. It is not unnatural to conclude that consciousness is therefore being confronted with an *image* of the object.

Husserl's position regarding the pictoriality of phantasy is consistent across Hua XIX and the early texts of Hua XXIII. In Text N^o.1 from 1904-5, Husserl invites the reader to consider the example of imagining a landscape (Hua XXIII, p. 15; 2005c, p. 17). The question of whether the content of the imagining corresponds (for example, through memory or expectation) to a posited perception is immaterial to this particular

thought experiment. We find in this case that there is a *similarity*, or *likeness*, in phenomenal content between the (posited or non-posited) perception and the phantasy. Indeed, Husserl goes on to assert that, quite generally, “[a]nyone who phantasies has an image experience” (Hua XXIII, p. 26; 2005c, p. 27). One takes the phantasy presentation to be “a re-presentation, a pictorialization” (Hua XXIII, p. 26; 2005c, p. 27). Again, in Hua XIX, the claim is no different: “[In the imagination] the same object appears *in a likeness*” (Hua XIX, p. 591; 2005b, p. 222); “imaginative contents comprise only analogising contents” (Hua XIX, p. 612; 2005b, p. 237).

The central phenomenological question at stake here is, however, whether the constitution of the likeness is immanent to the act itself, or whether it occurs only in a subsequent act of reflection. On this matter, Husserl’s early work is unequivocal: he refers precisely to the *character* of the act itself: “the character of the imagination lies in analogical picturing” (Hua XIX, p. 609; 2005b, p. 235). The Husserlian rationality at work here then is not inferential. The apprehension of the imagined object as being re-presented in an image is not held to be an inferential accomplishment. Instead, Husserl is arguing that the phantasy act itself has the very *tincture* of pictoriality. As J. B. Brough translates it,

image consciousness has a tincture that confers on it [...] the characteristic of representation according to resemblance. [...] And this is not a conceptual knowing either, nor does it imply that I undertake an act of distinguishing and relating, setting the appearing object in relation to an object thought of. On the contrary, the image is immediately felt to be an image. (Hua XXIII, p. 26; 2005c, pp. 27-8)

It is, of course, epistemologically inadequate merely to *insist* that phantasy is endowed with an act-character of pictoriality, even if one were to find this to be the case as a matter of descriptive fact. Husserl proceeds to attempt to justify this claim by describing the intentional structure of phantasy, arguing that phantasy and picture-consciousness share what he calls a “community of essence” (Hua XXIII, p. 21; 2005c, p. 22).

We are entitled to ask ourselves first of all, however, whether on introspective reflection, Husserl’s claim about the imagistic character of phantasy actually rings true. One way of challenging the claim is to pursue the question of whether there are any necessary limits on how realistic a phantasy may seem to be. It is conceivable that I might be able to imagine extremely vividly, and regardless of whether it exists or not, a certain landscape. I might assert without hyperbole that it is *as though* I were there, *as though* I were breathing the very country air, *as though* I were seeing the very trees. If I make such assertions in good faith and without hyperbole, then one must conclude simply that I have a very vivid imagination. It is erroneous to think that if a phantasy *seems* sufficiently real then it will be taken by the subject to *be* real. I do not mistake the appearance of the imagined landscape for an immediate perceptual presentation no matter how vividly it may appear. There are other reasons quite distinct from the quality of *fullness*⁷ of the imagining which ensure that I never waver from my

⁷ Husserl discusses the concept of the “fullness” of a presentation in Hua XIX, pp. 606-614; 2005b, pp. 233-238. Fullness in this context is characterised by three dimensions that he calls “extent”

apprehension of its phantasy character. It might be that I am aware that I am volitionally imagining something, and aware for that reason that the lived quality of my intentional act is other than that of direct perception. Pre-reflective awareness of one's own imaginative volition would then permeate the act-character of phantasy.

We must consider whether the imagining subject always has this kind of self-awareness, awareness that one is volitionally imagining. Is awareness of one's own volition always strictly present to the imagining consciousness? The case of a spontaneous day-dream seems to suggest that this is not the case. I might have a spontaneous day-dream of the same landscape that I imagined deliberately earlier on in our discussion. Now in this case the character of phantasy is still given to consciousness. I do not believe that I am suddenly in the countryside no matter how vivid the day-dream may be. The difficulty here then lies in explaining the act-character of phantasy without appealing either to a deficiency in the phantasy's fullness, or to awareness of the presence of conscious imaginative volition. The most convincing answer must be that I am aware of a *conflict* between the phenomenal content of the immediate presentation of my surroundings, and that of the day-dream. They seem to overlap each other and cannot be attended to simultaneously. If my awareness of my surroundings were to somehow recede – for example if I were to fall asleep – then my believing myself to be in the countryside would become a real possibility. The act-character of imagining would dissolve into one of perceiving.

We now have particularly strong grounds for rejecting the idea that the act-character of imagining necessarily depends upon some kind of deficiency in the fullness of the content. There are perfectly good reasons why an extremely vivid phantasy may be grasped as such, namely awareness of one's own imaginative volition and the conflict with one's awareness of one's surroundings. All of this now puts pressure on Husserl's early position that phantasy has the act-character of pictoriality. The structure of picture-consciousness, as we saw earlier, relies upon an essential discrepancy and differentiation between the appearance of the image-object and that of the implied perceptual presentation of the picture-subject. In Hua XXIII, Husserl attempts to deal with the question of what he calls "thoroughly vital phantasy" (Hua XXIII, p. 32; 2005c, p. 33) by arguing that it does not retain its freshness for long. As he puts it, "what appears turns into an image object of itself, as it were" (Hua XXIII, p. 33; 2005c, p. 34). Husserl's suggestion here is that the structure of picture-consciousness ineluctably asserts itself in phantasy. The intentional object is re-presented in an image-object. Image-object and intentional object are interwoven, and inter-penetrate one another. The image-object is unreal, constituted in consciousness and founded upon really-immanent phantasms.

Let us remind ourselves that the Husserlian account of picture-consciousness that we considered earlier involves three interwoven objectivities: picture-thing, image-object, and picture-subject. The interwoven character of these three objects in itself provides us with grounds for suspicion regarding Husserl's simultaneous contention

Footnote 7 continued

(completeness of scope), "liveliness" (fidelity), and "reality-level [...], the greater or less number of its strictly presentative contents" (which I take to mean richness of detail, vividness, or what we might perhaps call "resolution").

that although phantasy possesses the essential structure of picture-consciousness, it only involves two of the three objects, namely the image-object and the picture-subject. In fact, Husserl has good reasons for excluding the picture-thing from the structure of phantasy. Firstly, Husserl is certainly averse, indeed methodologically opposed, to being drawn into psychologistic speculations regarding mental images held to be susceptible in principle to empirical investigation. It is to the empirical world, as we noted earlier, that picture-things belong. There can therefore be no picture-thing immanent to consciousness. Secondly, when I imagine a landscape, the landscape does not appear to be framed or contained within a separate physical object. No picture-thing is given to consciousness, and this differentiates imagining a landscape from walking into an art gallery and viewing a painting of it. We must therefore also discard the idea that a picture-thing is somehow constituted by consciousness during phantasy.

The naïve view, the view which is often implicitly under the sway of psychologism, is that the image given to consciousness is a really-inherent inner picture. But we noted earlier that the image-object is not immanent to consciousness but constituted in a spontaneous act. Now if the structure of phantasy does not include a picture-thing, we must ask what Husserl considers to found the constitution of the image-object. His answer is that the image-object is constituted on the basis of *phantasms*. By “phantasm” Husserl means the imaginary correlate of sensation, indeed an intentional modification of sensation. Phantasm is the presentative content of phantasy, and interpreted in phantasy.

We noted earlier, however, that one of the distinctive features of picture-consciousness proper is that it permits the subject to switch attention back and forth between picture-thing and image-object. This volitional alteration in intentional object corresponds to a switching in conscious activity between direct perception and a “dwelling within” picture-consciousness. We should not take, however, the phenomenological and indeed ontological differentiation between picture-thing and image-object to imply constitutional independence between the two objects. The constitution of both objects is founded upon the same sensuous phenomenal content. Beyond this, however, the constitution of the image-object depends upon the perception of the picture-thing. As Marbach puts it, perception of the picture-thing is in fact an “intentional moment” of the constitution of the image-object (Marbach 1993, p. 179). This is to say that for the subject engaged in picture-consciousness, the possibility in principle of turning one’s attention to the picture-thing is an essential part of the structure of picture-consciousness itself. This finding has important consequences for the discussion concerning Husserl’s early understanding of phantasy. If the hypothesis that phantasy has the structure of picture-consciousness is true, then imagining, say, a landscape, implies the necessary possibility of turning one’s attention towards a picture-thing bearing the landscape’s image. The picture-thing *itself* must therefore be capable in principle of being constituted in phantasy. It would seem that we are then obliged to permit the possibility in principle of turning one’s attention towards a new picture-thing bearing the first picture-thing’s image. But then we would be faced with an infinite regress. The hypothesis that phantasy has the structure of picture-consciousness is therefore showing itself to be deeply problematic.

Let us briefly reflect upon, and recapitulate, Husserl's early writings on phantasy and picture-consciousness. We must observe that they actually entail a rather odd combination of commitments. On the one hand, the picture-thing is interwoven into the structure of picture-consciousness, the structure allegedly possessed by phantasy. But on the other hand, Husserl finds very strong, indeed compelling, grounds for excluding any essential role for a picture-thing in phantasy. Something, as we have found, has to "give". It certainly seems implausible, on detailed investigation, to speak of picture-consciousness without implicit reference to a picture-thing. Even when one "dwells within" picture-consciousness in the sense of being deeply absorbed in a picture, for example during aesthetic contemplation, there is still awareness of a conflict between image-object and picture-subject, a conflict which is attributable precisely to the constitution of the image-object being founded upon the same phenomenal content that founds the constitution of the picture-thing. The image-object is permeated by the perception of the picture-thing. The picture-thing cannot be subtracted from picture-consciousness without losing picture-consciousness itself.

One wonders, of course, just what happened to Husserl's "tinction" (Hua XXIII, p. 26; 2005c, p. 27) of resemblance when he eventually changed his account of the noetic character of phantasy. In Husserl's defence at this point, there is admittedly some phenomenological merit to the imagistic explanation. There is a neatness to it inasmuch as it coherently explains both the intuitional character of phantasy, and why we do not mistake phantasy for perception. Yet we have noted that the imagistic explanation also has certain seductive undertones that require exposure. For one thing, as I pointed out earlier, there is in common parlance a deep-seated conceptual entanglement between phantasy and pictures, attributable at least in part to the etymological linkage, present in both German and English, between imagining and imaging. In addition to this, however, we have also noted that the imagistic account is suspiciously closely aligned with the direction of neuroscientific and psychologicistic discourses, discourses from which Husserl rightly sought to distance himself and his phenomenological project. It may be that an underlying worry about lapsing into psychologism in some sense "necessitated" Husserl's remarkable initial certainty about the "tinction" of resemblance. Husserl may equally have felt philosophically obliged to adopt, at least provisionally, the imagistic explanation for want of better or more plausible explanations. Towards the end of this paper, however, I intend to indicate the direction of a quite different underlying explanation for Husserl's adopting his initial position. This is that the structure of *reflection* upon past acts of imagining turns out to be remarkably close to that of picture-consciousness. This is a finding which, I intend to argue, emerges from Husserl's mature understanding of phantasy, and it is to this more promising account that we now turn.

4 Imagination: The Mature Position

Husserl's early understanding of intentionality – notably that set out in *Logical Investigations* – is informed by what is sometimes referred to as a representation theory of the structure of consciousness. According to this view, conscious acts are underpinned by an essentially bi-partite structure of really-inherent content together

with an interpreting apprehension. Portions of the stream of really-inherent content are taken by the reflecting phenomenologist to *represent* features of the act's intentional object. Sensation, which in Husserl's early writings remains conceptually undifferentiated from sensuous content, thus provides the basis for acts of perceptual apprehension. Husserl's early account of phantasy is also moulded to fit the representation model, with phantasy entailing a phenomenal content of phantasms (the phantasy-correlate of sensations) which are interpreted in an "objectivating" apprehension (Hua XXIII, p. 22; 2005c, p. 24).

As I indicated earlier, Husserl initially thought the apprehension of phantasmal content yields an appearing image-object, a view toward which he must have gravitated because of its coherence with his early hypothesis that phantasy conforms to the same structure as picture-consciousness. Husserl does not proffer the representation theory, or "schematic view" as J. B. Brough calls it, as a descriptive account of what is normally experienced in cases of direct perception and clear phantasy. When I perceive a landscape, I do not first see immanent sense-data and then proceed from there to an interpreting apprehension. As a matter of descriptive fact, my intentional object is not immanent but transcendent. My attention in this case is not introspective but, on the contrary, directed precisely outwards, towards what is other. We must ask, then, wherein lies the merit of the representation theory? What contribution does it make to Husserl's enquiries?

It seems to me that the best way of answering this question involves the idea of grasping the representation model as an important yet flawed prototype for Husserl's mature understanding of intentionality. Husserl retains certain aspects of the representation model, namely the idea that the structure of consciousness is stratified and permits of explication, and that the stratification does not proliferate indefinitely but instead terminates at an absolute foundational stratum. Yet Husserl's understanding of the foundational layer changes over time, and the way in which it changes helps to explain Husserl's shift away from the imagistic account of phantasy.

One of the problems with the representation model is that it turns out to be unable to foster an adequate account of the relation between perception and phantasy. It is reasonable to suppose that perception and phantasy must have similarities in their intentional structure, on the grounds that both acts are intuitional: when I imagine a landscape, it is in some phenomenologically substantive sense *like* perceiving a landscape. Part of the problem, however, is that it remains unexplained just how the subject distinguishes between sensation and phantasm. If perception and phantasy both comply with the representation model then phantasms themselves must belong to the stream of really-inherent content. In this sense, phantasms are present to consciousness, in the here and now. Phantasy itself, after all, is not a phantasmised experience, on pain of infinite regress. Phantasy itself is an occurrent lived experience, with its own occurrent phenomenal content. But then the objects of phantasy constitution, being grounded in phenomenal content deemed to be present in the here and now, must be judged, like perceptual objects, also to be present. This cannot be the case. Even if I have a spontaneous day-dream about being in the countryside looking at a landscape, I do not take the landscape to be present. The

structure of phantasy must have a degree of complexity greater than that afforded by the representation model.

Husserl progresses beyond the schematic/representation model by penetrating the structure of experience to a more primordial level, namely that of the experience of experience, that is, the experience of conscious acts. This is the stratum of lived experience that Husserl also calls *internal consciousness*. Internal consciousness may be said to be non-thetic and non-objectivating in the sense that it does not involve any sense-making apprehension of what it experiences. It is prior to the interpreting apprehension of which Husserl speaks in the context of the representation model. The stratum of internal consciousness is the foundation of consciousness: there is no “observer” within transcendental subjectivity watching internal consciousness as it occurs, and there is therefore no infinite regress of the experience of experience, beyond the layer of internal consciousness.⁸

Husserl’s understanding of internal consciousness is intimately bound up with his concept of *impression*. Husserlian impression has two deeply interconnected aspects, aspects which reach to the heart of Husserlian transcendental phenomenology. Firstly, impression is bound up with temporality, and Husserl on occasion uses the term to refer to the “now” phase of time-consciousness. Impression in this sense can only be properly understood as but one member of an interdependent triad of constitutional moments, the other two being what he calls “protention” and “retention”. For Husserl, the flow of time-consciousness is not phenomenally distinct from the internal consciousness we have just discussed. As J. B. Brough points out, in Hua X Husserl regards internal consciousness as the “absolute time-constituting flow of consciousness” (Hua X, §34, p. 73).⁹ Again, in Hua XXIII Husserl remarks that the “perceiving” activity of internal consciousness is “nothing other than the time-constituting consciousness with its phases of flowing retentions and protentions” (Hua XXIII, Text 14 (1911-12), p. 308; 2005c, p. 370).

Secondly, however, Husserl also uses the term “impression” to refer more explicitly to specifically *sensory* impression. Sensory impression upon internal consciousness is what is meant in Husserl’s mature position by the term “sensation”. Sensation itself, then, is now understood to be a form of consciousness, and therefore differentiated from sense-data or sensuous content, a distinction that the representation model lacked the sophistication to support. Husserl replaces the representation model with a fresh paradigm according to which consciousness “consists of consciousness through and through” and sensation is “already consciousness” (Hua XXIII, p. 265; 2005c, p. 323). Sensation is an impressional consciousness occurring at the foundational stratum of internal consciousness.

I want to reflect a little further on the distinction between sensation and sense-data. Doing so is especially pertinent to the concerns of this paper, because a relatively detailed understanding of sensation is required in order to fully grasp the significance and role of Husserl’s notion of phantasm. As I indicated earlier on, I regard it as a relatively uncontroversial point that, as a matter of descriptive fact, our

⁸ For this reason it seems to me to be misleading when phenomenologists speak of the experience or awareness of a lived experience rather than simply of *having* a lived experience.

⁹ Cited in Brough’s introduction to the English translation of Hua XXIII, 2005c, p. LXII.

everyday conscious life is not about sensations but about ostensibly transcendent entities in the world. Yet there are certain circumstances which make it possible, even relatively easy, for the subject to attend to his or her own sensations precisely *qua* sensation. One obvious example is that of being in pain. It seems disingenuous to say that someone with severe toothache is aware of a tooth, or a nerve. It is more descriptively accurate to say that this person *is having* a pain sensation, and moreover *is able to attend to* this pain sensation. This is demonstrated by the fact that it is possible to characterise the pain as “sharp”, “dull”, and so on. “Sharp” and “dull” in this context are predicates attributed to the pain, not to the tooth or the nerve. Another example is that of sitting in sunlight with one’s eyes closed. In this case one becomes aware of redness in one’s visual field. There is no determinate intentional object beyond the redness, and we might say for this reason that the objectivating motivation of consciousness is being frustrated. The question is, how is this redness best understood phenomenologically? According to his early position, Husserl understands this redness to be really-inherent sense-data available to consciousness in a kind of raw presence. But with the discovery of internal consciousness, the story in Husserl’s mature position becomes more complicated, and must register the fact that one’s awareness of this redness is essentially conditioned by the flow of time-consciousness. Awareness of hyletic data is now understood to be already an outcome of the hyletic-retentional-protentional process. The moment of hyletic impression is certainly immanent to the process, but the process itself is foundational and phenomenally atomic. There is in this sense always already a “meaning beyond” what is strictly the hyletic data. Sitting in the sunlight with my eyes closed, then, my awareness of redness in my visual field is best characterised not as consciousness of a discrete intentional object that we might call “red hyletic data”, but instead as an awareness of a flow of sensations of redness. The hyletic data is grasped as immanent to the lived experience of the sensation, but only on reflection. It would seem that strictly descriptively speaking, hyletic data *as such* turns out to be an abstracted moment of the atomic hyletic-retentional-protentional process, rather than something primordially given.

If consciousness must always involve a “meaning-beyond” what is really-inherent to consciousness itself, and intentionality is always directed toward what is in some sense constituted rather than what is given, then should we not argue, with Gurwitsch and Drummond, that the notion of hyletic data has no proper place in a truly phenomenological account of intentionality, and that Husserl’s commitment to hyletic data is really a mistaken remnant of psychologistic analysis, and needs to be exposed and rejected as such? I want to suggest that we are not required to take this step; that doing so is neither necessary on expressly phenomenological grounds, nor necessary in order to make sense of the evolution of Husserl’s own account.¹⁰

¹⁰ Some readers may welcome some further elaboration on my stance with respect to Gurwitsch and Drummond on this matter. My elaboration is as follows. I shall consider first Gurwitsch, then Drummond. Gurwitsch endorses the Gestaltist critique of the Husserlian schematic model’s dualism of sensuous content and interpreting apprehension, on the grounds that this schematic model falsifies the descriptive facts about perceptual experience (Gurwitsch 1966, pp. 253–6). In support of this view, Gurwitsch argues that the procedure of eidetic variation in which Husserl purports to isolate hyletic data is invalid because it presupposes a version of the constancy hypothesis which belongs to the psychologism that Husserl has

One of the difficulties with taking the radical step of excluding the hyletic data from the noesis is that it seems regressive in the sense of effectively effacing the qualitative difference between the experiences of perception and sensation. During sensation, one is aware of *something* which is different from a perceptual object in that the object of sensation is given apodictically to consciousness. If one cannot appeal *in some way* to the notion of hyletic data then it becomes remarkably difficult to account for the descriptive facts about such non-perceptual intentional experiences as we considered earlier (namely, being in pain, or sitting in sunlight with one's eyes closed). Husserl, in his mature position, however, *is* able to adequately account for such purely sensory experiences: one is aware of an impressional *flow* of hyletic data by virtue of the hyletic-retentional-protentional process which is foundational to consciousness. During normal perception, the

Footnote 10 continued

already rejected (Gurwitsch 1966, pp. 101-6, 242). Gurwitsch goes on to argue that the faulty schematic model should be replaced by an interpretation of Husserl's noesis-noema model, according to which sense-data disappears from the account (Gurwitsch 1966, pp. 256-67). My comments on Gurwitsch's position are as follows. Firstly, it does not follow from the fact that there are problems with the schematic model that hyletic data must be completely expunged from the account. Husserl recognises that the schematic model has problems, but retains hyletic data in the noesis-noema model, as evidenced by his remark in *Ideas I* §36 that "[o]ne easily sees [...] that not every really inherent moment in the concrete unity of an intensive mental process itself has the fundamental characteristic, intentionality, thus the property of being 'consciousness of something'. That concerns, for example, all data of sensation which play so great a role in perceptual intuitions of physical things" (Hua III, p. 65; 1998, p. 75). This view from 1913 comes after Husserl's transcendental turn, but prior to the full elaboration of the temporal constitution of sensation. Even after the subsequent development of Husserl's genetic phenomenology, there is nothing to preclude one from retaining the data of sensation as a moment of the noesis, capable of being attended to as an intentional object in its own right through an alteration in the direction of one's introspective attention. Secondly, Gurwitsch is certainly entitled to his own view on how the noesis-noema model should be interpreted if it is to succeed, and thereby implicitly move beyond a strictly Husserlian position. But Gurwitsch's Gestaltist motivations, and the resulting version of the noesis-noema model that he arrives at, have problems of their own. The debatability of Gurwitsch's position is exemplified in Drummond (1990), Chapter 4. We are not obliged to accept Gurwitsch's position in order to make sense of the evolution of Husserl's thought, which is the primary concern of this paper. I turn now to Drummond. Drummond also thinks there is a problem (a different one from the one that Gurwitsch identifies) with the method of eidetic variation in which Husserl attempts to isolate and bring to consciousness hyletic data. As Drummond points out, Husserl isolates intentional essence (the conjunction of act-matter and act-quality) and sensuous content through two different types of imaginative variation, namely variation of sensuous content while intentional essence remains constant, and vice-versa (Drummond 1990, pp. 63-4). Drummond's objection here is that Husserl ends up isolating not hyletic data but medial conditionality, including physiological and psychophysical conditionality (Drummond 1990, pp. 144-8). In support of ultimately incorporating this view into an Husserlian mature position, Drummond appeals to Husserl's view in *Ideas I* that the noesis comprises those moments of the act which "bear in themselves the specific trait of intentionality" (Hua III, p. 172; 1998, p. 203; see Drummond 1990, p. 56). But it is far from certain that this latter view of Husserl's should be taken to conflict with his very clear retention of noetic sense-data earlier on in *Ideas I* (Hua III, p. 65; 1998, p. 75). The key Husserlian thought here, I would suggest, is that hyletic data (or, in the later Husserl, the temporal flow of hyletic data) is always in some sense available to consciousness through an alteration in the direction of one's introspective attention. It is certainly true that after *Ideas I* (1913), the development of Husserl's genetic phenomenology has some significant way to go. But nowhere in the Husserlian corpus is there an argument in favour of the complete elimination of hyletic data from the phenomenological account of perceptual experience. Drummond's case for discarding hyletic data from the phenomenological account, and attributing his own account to Husserl, is therefore not one that I necessarily need to commit myself to for the purposes of this paper.

impressional flow of hyletic data as such is transparent to consciousness. But the phenomenological significance of attending expressly to one's sensations is that it renders the impressional flow salient, and discloses hyletic data as being really-inherent to the noesis. On this view of the temporal constitution of sensation, it would certainly be confusing to claim that sensation is founded by a *separate* stratum, a layer of hyletic data. The relation between hyletic data and sensation cannot be one of founding, because hyletic data is really-inherent to sensation. Hyletic data cannot be said to found something which is already supposed to contain it.

Reflecting carefully in this way on what sensation really is now positions us well to understand what Husserl means by the term “phantasm”. The Husserlian understanding of phantasm depends upon his account of sensation. But the relation between phantasm and sensation is not only one of analytical dependence. There is a phenomenological dependence which can be expressed by saying that phantasm is a *reproductive modification* of sensation. This is to say that every phantasm bears within it a relation to a particular sensation, and that this relation is one of non-primordial reproduction. Phantasms reproduce sensations in a non-primordial fashion.

It seems appropriate at this juncture to underscore the importance of the distinction between the notions of actuality and authenticity, a distinction which I believe Marbach (1993) does not always observe particularly closely.¹¹ An object is given *authentically* if it appears primordially such as in an act of direct perception. But appearing authentically is not the same thing as appearing actually. An object is said to appear *actually* if it is posited. A phantasy object may be given both actually and inauthentically, for example if I were to sit at home and imagine the university library. We noted earlier that sensations are positing because they occur at the level of impressional internal consciousness. This is to say they are grasped immediately as actual because they involve impressions upon internal consciousness in the here and now. But phantasms, unlike sensations, are *constituted* rather than primordial and consequently are not given in the manner of authenticity. As Husserl puts it “phantasm, the sensuous content of phantasy, gives itself as not present” (Hua XXIII, pp. 80-81; 2005c, p. 87).

As I indicated earlier, phantasy is sometimes said to intentionally *imply* a perception. We are now in a position to explicate in more detail the sense of this claim. Husserl remarks in Hua XXIII that the distinction between perception and phantasy rests upon the distinction between sensation and phantasm (Hua XXIII, p. 81; 2005c, p. 87). The account of phantasm as the reproductive modification of sensation enables us to understand the nature of the phenomenal content of phantasy. So one sense of the claim that acts of phantasy are reproductions of acts of perception is that phantasy involves the reproduction of the sensations which ground a particular perception.

¹¹ On many occasions Marbach refers to acts of intuitional presentation as involving perceiving an object “in the mode of non-actuality” (e.g. 1993, pp. 60, 72, 73, 79, 126, 148, 179). But this seems to me somewhat misleading. In these cases the implied act of perception itself may or may not be posited, depending, for example, on whether we are considering an act of memory or an act of phantasy. The act's intentional object is given inauthentically but may or may not be posited.

Yet this is really a structural point about the relation between phantasy and perception rather than a descriptive one. Phantasy is to perception what phantasms are to sensations: reproductions. But it seems to be at odds with the descriptive facts to suggest that during an act of phantasy, the primary act being undertaken by the subject is a reproduction of sensations. Of course, it certainly seems possible to volitionally reproduce a sensation or a flow of sensations (“sensation” understood here in accordance with Husserl’s mature position as consciousness through and through, not merely sense-data). I might, for example, to develop the case we considered earlier, *imagine* sitting in sunlight with my eyes closed. In this case I am readily able to attend to the red phantasms as such, because the spontaneous motivation toward objectivation is, as I put it earlier on, being “frustrated”. But in standard cases of phantasy, in which one has a distinct intentional object, one does not reproduce sensations *in order to* reproduce a perception. Imagining is more immediate than that: one normally imagines something, as it were, “without further ado”. The question, then, is what exactly is the object of reproduction? The appropriate *descriptive* answer must be that the object of reproduction in fact *is* the implied perceptual act itself. But I believe it would be incorrect here to suggest that it is an *objectified* act that is reproduced, on the grounds that phantasy itself remains intuitional in character. Instead, the object of reproduction must be the implied perceptual act *as lived experience*. In this case, we must conclude that reproduction always operates at the level of noesis. Noeses are both the objects and the outcomes of reproductions.

The term “reproduction” is helpful in this context insofar as it conveys an essential sense of indirection—that there is, so to speak, a fold in the intentional structure of acts of phantasy. On the other hand, the term “reproduction” is not without its drawbacks. For one thing, it might be taken to mean that the implied perception is replicated with the utmost fullness, something which is rarely, if ever, the case. Imagining is characterised by variability in fidelity, vividness, and completeness of scope. There are often discontinuities in the angles from which the object seems to appear. The object may appear clearly at one moment and vaguely the next. Husserl remarks that the objects of reproduced acts seem to “hover before us [*vorschweben*]” (Hua XXIII, p. 333; 2005c, p. 405). This “hovering before” one is connected with a kind of overlapping between what is given in the realm of phantasy and one’s actual perceptual field. But what is imagined “hovers” because, of the two fields, the phantasy field is the less steadfast, even in cases of what might be called clear phantasy. Only the implied perception itself, precisely as the fulfilment of the imagining, can be said to attain the ideal of fullness.

A further terminological difficulty lies in the fact that, under normal circumstances, talk of a “reproduction” implies a positing of something prior, that is, of precisely the reproduction’s object. In the case of phantasy, there is undoubtedly something odd about claiming to *re-produce* an act of perception which is precisely non-positing or neutralised from the outset. In this sense, there is certainly a case for describing phantasy as a *simulation* of an act rather than a reproduction of one. The advantage of retaining the term reproduction, however, is that it makes explicit the structural homology between phantasy, memory, and expectation, which is surely one of the central discoveries of Husserl’s entire treatment of the imagination.

Memory and expectation both posit the acts that they reproduce, while phantasy can perhaps most accurately be categorised as a non-positing reproduction of an act of perception. The act of perception is non-positing, while the perceptual object in question may or may not be posited, the concept of phantasy admitting of both cases.

Husserl's understanding of the homology between phantasy and memory implies that phantasy has the same essential structure as a neutralised memory. But we must distinguish this view from the claim that phantasy precisely *is* a neutralised memory. As J. B. Brough points out, although Husserl initially did regard phantasy precisely as a neutralised memory, he changed his position at some point during the 1920s, instead holding that acts of phantasy do not essentially entail a prior act to be neutralised, and that phantasy is non-positional "from the beginning" (Hua XXIII, 2005c, pp. XXXVIII-XXXIX). Yet in this respect we are entitled to ask, if only in passing, just how it is possible in the first place to imagine something that one has never experienced. It is not implausible to think that there may in fact be *some* kind of relation between acts of phantasy and memory, but one which is more complex than phantasy simply being a neutralised memory. One would expect, for example, that someone who has never seen a picture of a unicorn (and, for obvious reasons, never seen a unicorn) should nonetheless still in principle be able to imagine a unicorn, *provided* they have had prior experience, through pictures or otherwise, of such things as horses and horns. This would seem to point to the idea that the phantasy noesis can, at least on some occasions, be understood as *some kind of composite* (and this would require further elaboration) of one or more reproduced noeses drawn from memories.¹²

What may be observed more confidently, however, is that in Husserl's thought there emerges an important reciprocal relation between the concepts of impression and reproduction. On the one hand, all impressions – actual and possible – upon internal consciousness are held to be capable in principle of being reproduced (Hua XXIII, pp. 307, 330; 2005c, pp. 369, 402). All actual impressions permit of being reproduced after the fact in the act of memory. And all possible impressions are susceptible in principle to the non-positing reproduction occurring in phantasy. Pure phantasy, according to Husserl, is the consciousness in which pure possibilities are given (Hua XXIII, pp. 578-9; 2005c, p. 696; also Hua XIX p. 645; 2005b, p.259). On the other hand, reproductions, like all experiences, also make their own impression. An impression of remembering, expecting, or imagining, is simply made by virtue of the noetic component of the act, the lived experience of the reproduction itself.

Our discussion so far of the reproduction of acts has been implicitly making use of an extremely important feature of phenomenological introspection in general, the capacity to objectify conscious acts in reflection. It has been possible to elucidate the essential structure of the reproduction of acts through an objectifying reflection

¹² The possibility that I am raising here is that moments of a phantasy experience may on reflection carry a buried act-quality of remembrance. But there is a danger here of allowing psychologistic reasoning to influence the direction of phenomenological speculation. And it is not immediately clear that this hypothesis necessarily conforms to the descriptive facts. I do not propose to pursue this matter further in this paper, beyond saying that it appears to require further phenomenological investigation.

upon a primarily descriptive enquiry into the nature of the experience of phantasy. Alternatively, if we look at our investigation in a slightly different way, we might say that we have found it to be in the nature of reproductions to be amenable to objectification by the subject. Of course, one has a choice. One does not find oneself compelled, as part of the act of phantasy, to objectify the act. One may, volitionally or otherwise, simply “live in” the reproduction. In fact, there is nothing to prevent us from repeatedly switching our attention back and forth between reproduction as lived experience and reproduction as objectified act. For reasons which will become clearer as we proceed, it will prove valuable for us to explicitly note at this point this double aspect to the reproduction of acts. As Husserl is right to observe and make explicit, “In every ‘reproduction’, I have a double focus or attitude as a possibility” – to live the experience or to objectify it (Hua XXIII, p. 560; 2005c, p. 672).

Phantasy bears a *relation* to another conscious act, namely a perception, but does not itself *contain* this perception. Phantasy is not the *application* of a modification but instead, as Husserl puts it in Hua XXIII, precisely “modification through and through” (Hua XXIII, pp. 265, 268; 2005c, pp. 323, 326). The wording of Husserl’s account of this structure in *Ideas I* §99 suggests that he is not unaffected by a sense of its strangeness:

[T]he *reproductive* modification simpliciter, the presentation simpliciter [...] in its own essence, remarkably enough, is given as modification of something else. Presentation refers back to perception in its own peculiar phenomenological essence [...]. (Hua III, p. 209; 1998, p. 244)

To the twin attitudes that we remarked upon above, namely those of objectification and of dwelling within the reproduction, there correspond the twin intentional objects of the reproduced act and the reproduced act’s intentional object. If, for example, I sit at home and imagine the university library, then my attention is directed towards precisely the library, and not towards some image or semblance of it. Yet not only am I thinking *about* the library (and not about an image of the library) but I am also *quasi-perceiving* the library. This is to say that it is *as if* I were perceiving the library or that the library is given intuitionally in the mode “as if”.

My awareness of the modification “as if” is traceable to the fact that reproductions are not primordially impressional in the sense that they do not entail occurrent sensations. Awareness of the difference in act-character between perceiving and imagining then is surely attributable, if not wholly then at least in part, to a pre-reflective awareness of the constitution of phantasms, the constitution of reproductions of sensations. Reproductions, like all experiences, make their impression as lived experiences, but they are not in the first instance impressional, because their content is governed not by the sphere of otherness but by subjectivity from the beginning.

We are now compelled therefore to differentiate between two distinct kinds of impression. Firstly, we have primordial impressions of sensuous content upon internal consciousness. And secondly, we have the impressions made by the lived experience of reproductions. Husserl explicates this difference in terms of two time consciousnesses: awareness of present time and awareness of represented time.¹³

¹³ Hua X, No.45, cited in Marbach (1993, pp. 84-5).

This idea of a double time-awareness leads us into a further reason why phantasy is not mistaken for perception. According to Husserl, the perceptual world is always to some extent present to consciousness during acts of mental re-presentation.¹⁴ Furthermore, Husserl believes that when a subject who is aware of his/her surroundings imagines, say, a landscape, then the relation between what is re-presented and what is presented is one of “overlapping” (*Verdeckung*). They cannot be attended to simultaneously because they belong to different streams of time-consciousness. This phenomenon of overlapping works to differentiate re-presented appearances from the presentation of one’s surroundings. Marbach argues that perceptual awareness of the world is actually constitutive of the structure of reproductions of acts.¹⁵ However it seems to me that the presentation of one’s surroundings only becomes critical in cases of involuntary phantasy. In cases of deliberate phantasy, the apprehension of the “as if” modification of a perception can be explained by the subject’s own awareness of the very activity of imagining.

5 Nested Reproductions

It is a straightforward yet highly significant corollary of our discussion of reproductions that reproductions themselves are capable of being reproduced. As the careful reader will have already observed, the reason for the reproducibility of reproductions must be that reproductions themselves produce an impression (an impression which we have noted must be non-primal) which, like all impressions, permits of being reproduced. In Marbach’s terminology, the reproduction of a reproduction can said to be an example of the *iteration* (or “nesting” as we might also call it) of acts of intuitional presentation. Examples of iteration include such mental activities as phantasy within phantasy, memory within memory, memory within phantasy, and so on, even including higher orders of iteration.

Let us consider the following example. I am remembering imagining the library. The double focus that we discussed earlier means that I remember not only the act of imagining the library but also its lived experience. I remember the library appearing in the manner “as if I were perceiving it”. We must now consider the additional effect of the modification introduced by remembering the imagining. The original imagining does not occur again, and is not *itself* experienced again. But it is *as if* I were imagining the library again. Strictly speaking this is precisely to say that it is *as if it were as if I were perceiving* the library again. This recursive articulation of what it is like to remember imagining something may seem convoluted but the convolution is, I believe, genuine, and a consequence of the recursive structure of the iteration of reproductions.

According to Marbach, the experience of remembering imagining something possesses an immanent tendency towards self-simplification.¹⁶ On Marbach’s account, if one dwells within the lived experience of remembering imagining, say,

¹⁴ See, for example, Hua I, §51; or *Experience and Judgement*, §42, cited in Marbach (1993, p. 84).

¹⁵ Marbach (1993, p. 85).

¹⁶ Marbach (1993, pp. 153–4).

the library, there is a tendency for one to simply end up imagining the library. The modification introduced by remembering doing so seems to recede, if not wholly disappear. The suggestion here then is that a level of intentional implication somehow becomes suppressed. Furthermore, Marbach argues that remembering imagining something is not the only case in which such a transformation might occur. In Marbach's view, imagining imagining has a tendency to become simply imagining, and remembering remembering has a tendency to become simply remembering.

As I intend to elaborate in what follows, Marbach's account of this kind of contraction in the structure of nested reproductions is, in my opinion, ultimately at odds with the descriptive facts. It seems to me that where such transformations do occur, they are perhaps best viewed as consequences of some kind of subjective frailty which it would be mistaken to regard as particularly significant. However, I believe there is one important aspect of Marbach's account that needs to be noted and to some extent preserved. If I am presently remembering imagining something then the presentation of my current surroundings is liable to dominate, or at least interfere with, any reproduced impression I may have of my original surroundings at the time of the imagining. Naturally this assumption will hold true provided (1) the respective presentations of my surroundings (present and remembered) are of similar prominence, and (2) my attention is directed towards the imagined object as it was imagined and not the remembered surroundings. Let us assume for the present purposes that (1) and (2) happen to hold true. Then in this case Marbach thinks that the effective suppression of the remembered surroundings by my present surroundings gives rise to a kind of collapsed structure involving the original imagining, yet grounded in the awareness of my present surroundings, and that this collapsed structure itself is homologous to that of a simple imagining. The problem here is that Marbach overlooks the fact that something about the activity of remembering is still at work: I am remembering the way the imagined object looked, not imagining the object. It is mistaken, then, to think that, for a competent subject, remembering imagining tends to undergo a transformation into straightforward imagining.

In fact, something more interesting is surely going on. When I dwell in the lived experience of remembering imagining the library, the remembered object is not the library. I am not remembering the library, but the appearance of the library when it was imagined. My intentional object is an image grasped as an image, that is, as a semblance. I have a picture-subject, namely the library. And I have in a sense a picture-thing, namely the imagining as an objectified act. We arrive then at a most interesting finding: remembering imagining something conforms to a structure homologous to that of picture-consciousness. And this provides us with a possible explanation for Husserl's reaching his initial account of phantasy: in the course of his phenomenological reflections on this matter, he may have been remembering previous acts of imagining.

Husserl remarks that remembering has the quality of "again" or "once again" (Hua XXIII, pp. 286-288; 2005c, pp. 345-7). But this "again" is not merely a quality that is passively observed by consciousness, unless the act of remembering is involuntary. In acts of volitional remembering, the quality "again" is a requirement

towards whose fulfilment consciousness actively works. Once one has specified what one is to remember, the remembering is, to a greater or lesser extent (depending on the nature of the specification), heteronomous and constrained. Now the act of remembering imagining the library is wholly constrained by the way the library appeared when I imagined it. This transcendence of the remembered object contributes constitutively to our discovery that remembering imagining has the structure of picture-consciousness. A picture in a gallery and the semblance it bears transcend my viewing them in the same way that the imaginational appearance of the library transcends my remembering imagining the library.

6 Conclusion

Our discussion of the Husserlian account of the various forms of intuitional presentation has in a sense come full-circle. We began with an examination of the structure of picture-consciousness and proceeded from there to a discussion of phantasy. We then traced the reasons behind the transition in Husserl's understanding of intuitional presentation and discovered how the mature account permits of the iteration of such acts. I then argued that the essential structure of picture-consciousness turns out to be capable of re-appearing in the context of such iterations, and that this clarifies and improves Husserl's initial intuition that phantasy is connected in some important way with picture-consciousness.

Let us reflect in more detail upon the important milestones of this journey. It is an indication of the seductive power of the imagistic account of phantasy that Husserl initially pursued this hypothesis in spite of being aware of the dangers of etymological and psychologicistic biases. The careful development of a detailed account of picture-consciousness has proved invaluable in pin-pointing some of the fault-lines in Husserl's early position. Perhaps the central problem relates to how or where the so-called picture-thing is supposed to fit into phantasy. For perfectly understandable reasons, Husserl tries to abolish any notion of the picture-thing and make do with the image-object and picture-subject. This avoids the pitfalls of being drawn into psychologistic accounts involving mental images supposedly amenable to scientific investigation. Equally, it also avoids the threat of infinite regress inherent in talk of imagining a picture-thing. Unfortunately picture-consciousness proper turns out to inherently involve the subject's ability to shift attention between picture-thing and image-object. The image-object is optically heteronomous upon the picture-thing and infused with the same phenomenal content. In running up against this problem, Husserl is forced to confront the counter-intuitive idea that imagining may not after all necessarily involve an image as such at all.

The evolution of Husserl's understanding of phantasy is bound up with his changing understanding of what sensations actually are, and this in turn is bound up with the development of his crucial notion of internal consciousness. In rethinking the foundations of consciousness, Husserl moves away from the primitive representation model of *Logical Investigations* which turns out to lack the resources to properly account for phantasy. In re-conceiving of sensation as itself a form of consciousness through and through, and of phantasms as reproductions of

sensations, Husserl finds a new way of accounting for the intuitional character of phantasy and takes an important step in clarifying the relation between perception and phantasy, something that remained somewhat obscure when phantasy was conceived in terms of pictoriality.

According to the new model, a wide range of acts of intuitional presentation, most prominently phantasy, memory, and expectation, come to be understood as reproductions of primordial impressions made upon internal consciousness. These so-called “reproductions” do not somehow *contain* their corresponding original impressions but rather bear a relation of *implication* or *modification* towards them. Reproductions have a unity of performance such that they are given to consciousness as modifications through and through. The unity of the impression made by a reproduction renders it amenable to itself being the object of a subsequent reproduction. For this reason, Husserl’s mature understanding of the imagination opens onto a potentially vast, and indeed in principle infinite, array of different types of conscious acts all conforming to the general structure of nested reproductions of impressions. In this paper I have sought to provide a descriptive account of what is given to consciousness in one particular example of nested reproduction, namely that of remembering imagining. I have argued that when one remembers imagining an object, the object which was imagined is, as a matter of descriptive fact, phenomenally given in the manner of a semblance, and consonantly that the essential structure of the experience involves objectivities corresponding to the three intentional objects constitutive of picture-consciousness. It is also my tentative suggestion that the fact of this homology may even have contributed to Husserl’s starting intuition (ultimately found to be erroneous) that phantasy itself is given in the act-character of pictoriality. While my analysis seems to show that a structure of experience homologous to picture-consciousness is *capable* of arising in the context of iterated reproductions, this does not obviate the need for further careful investigation into the descriptive facts about other complex acts, such as remembering remembering, imagining remembering, and remembering expecting, in all the uniqueness and particularity of their subjective performance.

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